

CLAIMS

1. A method of enabling an auction buyer to submit a bid, the method including the steps of:

5 providing the auction buyer with a form containing information relating to a bid transaction, the form including coded data indicative of at least one parameter of the bid transaction;

receiving, in a computer system, data from a sensing device regarding said at least one parameter and regarding movement of the sensing device relative to the form, the
10 sensing device, when moved relative to the form, sensing the data regarding said at least one parameter using at least some of the coded data and generating the data regarding its own movement relative to the form; and

interpreting, in the computer system, said movement of the sensing device as it relates to said at least one parameter.

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2. The method of claim 1 in which the parameter is an action parameter of the bid transaction, the method including effecting, in the computer system, an operation in respect of the action parameter.

20 3. The method of claim 2 in which the action parameter of the bid transaction is selected from the group comprising:

requesting the subcategories contained in an auction category, requesting the auction listings contained in an auction subcategory, searching auction listings, requesting the details of an auction item listing, sending e-mail to the seller of an item, requesting a bid
25 history related to an item, requesting a list of leading bidders related to an item, and placing a bid.

4. The method of claim 1 in which the parameter is an option parameter of the bid transaction, the method including identifying, in the computer system, that the auction
30 buyer has entered a hand-drawn mark by means of the sensing device and effecting, in the computer system, an operation associated with the option parameter.

5. The method of claim 4 in which the option parameter is associated with at least one of:

requesting the subcategories contained in an auction category, requesting the auction listings contained in an auction subcategory, searching auction listings, requesting the details of an auction item listing, sending e-mail to the seller of an item, requesting a bid history related to an item, requesting a list of leading bidders related to an item, placing a bid, a search results limit, and a search category specification.

6. The method of claim 1 in which the parameter is a text parameter of the bid transaction, the method including identifying, in the computer system, that the auction buyer has entered handwritten text data by means of the sensing device and effecting, in the computer system, an operation associated with the text parameter.

7. The method of claim 6 which includes converting, in the computer system, the handwritten text data to computer text.

8. The method of claim 7 in which the text parameter is associated with at least one of:

a name of the auction buyer, auction item search text, and a bid amount.

9. The method of claim 1 in which the parameter is an authorization parameter of the bid transaction, the method including identifying, in the computer system, that the auction buyer has entered a handwritten signature by means of the sensing device and effecting, in the computer system, an operation associated with the authorization parameter.

10. The method of claim 9 which includes verifying, in the computer system, that the signature is that of the auction buyer.

11. The method of claim 10 in which the authorization parameter is associated with authorization of at least one of:

placing a bid, and payment for a successful bid.

12. The method of claim 1 in which the parameter is a picture parameter of the bid transaction, the method including identifying, in the computer system, that the auction buyer has entered a hand-drawn picture by means of the sensing device and effecting, in the computer system, an operation associated with the picture parameter.

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13. The method of claim 12 in which the picture parameter is associated with a picture of a listed item.

14. The method of claim 1 in which the form contains information relating to at least one of:

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terms of an item auction, a description of an item being listed for auction, categories in which an item can be listed, subcategories in which an item can be listed, a number of items in a subcategory, a title of an item listing, and an identification number of a listed item.

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15. The method of claim 1 which includes printing the form on demand.

16. The method of claim 15 which includes printing the form on a surface of a surface-defining means and, at the same time that the form is printed, printing the coded data on the surface.

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17. The method of claim 16 which includes printing the coded data to be substantially invisible in the visible spectrum.

18. The method of claim 1 which includes distributing a plurality of the forms using a mixture of multicast and pointcast communications protocols.

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19. The method of claim 1 in which the sensing device contains an identification means which imparts a unique identity to the sensing device and identifies it as being associated with a particular auction buyer and in which the method includes monitoring, in the computer system, said identity.

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20. The method of claim 1 which includes providing all required information relating to the bid transaction in the form to eliminate the need for a separate display device.

21. The method of claim 1 in which the form is printed on multiple pages and in which
5 the method includes binding the pages.

22. A system for enabling an auction buyer to submit a bid, the system including:
a form containing information relating to a bid transaction, the form including
coded data indicative of at least one parameter of the bid transaction; and

10 a computer system for receiving data from a sensing device regarding said at least one parameter and regarding movement of the sensing device relative to the form, and for interpreting said movement of the sensing device as it relates to said at least one parameter, the sensing device, when moved relative to the form, sensing the data regarding said at least one parameter using at least some of the coded data and generating the data regarding its
15 own movement relative to the form.

23. The system of claim 22 in which said at least one parameter of the bid transaction is selected from the group comprising an action parameter of the bid transaction, an option parameter of the bid transaction, a text parameter of the bid transaction, an authorization
20 parameter of the bid transaction, and a picture parameter of the bid transaction.

24. The system of claim 23 in which the action parameter of the bid transaction is selected from the group comprising:

requesting the subcategories contained in an auction category, requesting the
25 auction listings contained in an auction subcategory, searching auction listings, requesting the details of an auction item listing, sending e-mail to the seller of an item, requesting a bid history related to an item, requesting a list of leading bidders related to an item, and placing a bid.

30 25. The system of claim 23 in which the option parameter is associated with at least one of:

requesting the subcategories contained in an auction category, requesting the

auction listings contained in an auction subcategory, searching auction listings, requesting the details of an auction item listing, sending e-mail to the seller of an item, requesting a bid history related to an item, requesting a list of leading bidders related to an item, placing a bid, a search results limit, and a search category specification.

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26. The system of claim 23 in which the text parameter is associated with at least one of:

a name of the auction buyer, auction item search text, and a bid amount.

10 27. The system of claim 23 in which the authorization parameter is associated with authorization of at least one of:

placing a bid, and payment for a successful bid.

15 28. The system of claim 23 in which the picture parameter is associated with a picture of a listed item.

29. The system of claim 22 in which the sensing device includes a marking nib.

20 30. The system of claim 22 in which the sensing device contains an identification means which imparts a unique identity to the sensing device and identifies it as being associated with a particular auction buyer.

25 31. The system of claim 22 in which the form is printed on a surface of a surface-defining means and in which the system includes a printer for printing the form on demand.

32. The system of claim 31 in which the printer prints the coded data at the same time as printing the form on the surface-defining means.

30 33. The system of claim 22 in which the coded data is substantially invisible in the visible spectrum.

34. The system of claim 32 which includes a database for keeping a retrievable record

of each form generated, each form being retrievable by using its identity as included in its coded data.

35. The system of claim 31 in which, to cater for a form printed on multiple pages, the
5 printer includes a binding means for binding the pages.